



DAVIS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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News Release

Gear Up for Safe Winter Sports

Davis County Health Department offers safety tips and gear

(Farmington, Utah) – With the 2006 Winter Olympics only days away, the world will witness some of its best athletes competing safely on the slopes. As this renewal of interest in winter sports begins, the staff of the Davis County Health Department reminds kids and parents of the importance of proper safety equipment, training, and supervision. The health department also offers a limited number of ASTM International certified ski/snowboard helmets for \$16 to those who call 451-3489.

According to the Utah Department of Health's Violence and Injury Prevention Program, each year more than 2,000 Utahns suffer traumatic brain injury that can change their lives forever. Every winter, an average of 19 of these injuries occur on Utah's slopes. Davis County Health Department's staff wants to reduce the number of head injuries from winter sports by making the cost of helmets affordable and encouraging safety on the slopes.

"Basic health and comfort precautions can go a long way in preventing injury," said Teresa Smith, a health educator for the county's health department. "Be sure to wear a helmet, dress in layers, take lessons if you are just beginning, and stick to safe terrain."

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Additional safety tips include using the right equipment for your size and skill, never skiing or snowboarding alone, making sure landing areas are clear prior to jumping, and staying in bounds and away from trees, she continued. “Use sunscreen throughout the day and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated while recreating in Utah’s dry winter air,” she said.

“Also, snowboarders should consider using wrist guards since injuries to wrists and arms from falls are the most common for this sport,” said Smith.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, when skiers and snowboarders wear helmets – they reduce the risk of head injuries by nearly half.

Although the rate of injuries is higher in children than in any other age group, caregivers are not immune to injury and need to wear the proper winter sports helmets, too. Smith cautioned, “Remember your children learn safety habits from you.”

The health department’s director, Lewis Garrett, said, “A helmet can reduce injuries, but it cannot protect against all types of impacts. Wearing a helmet is not a license to go faster.” Be sure to follow the rules of the slopes and ski or snowboard in control, he said. “There is no substitute for responsible behavior on the slopes.”

For more information about preventing accidental injury or to purchase a ski/snowboard helmet, call 451-3489.

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